



Compliance Visit Report 2009-2010 University of Texas - Austin

According to TAC §228.10(c) An entity approved by the SBEC under this chapter...shall be reviewed at least once every five years under procedures approved by the TEA staff; however, a review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the TEA staff. Per TAC §228.1(c) all educator preparation programs are subject to the same standards of accountability, as required under Chapter 229 of this title. The Texas Education Agency administers Texas Administrative Code rules required by the Texas legislature for the regulation of all educator preparation programs in the state. Please see the complete Texas Administrative Code rules at www.tea.state.tx.us for details contained in each rule.

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Sandra Nix, Program Specialist, Erica Chao, Systems Analyst, and Dr. Phillip Eaglin, Program Specialist, conducted a Texas Education Agency continuing approval visit on March 30 – April 1, 2010. The following are the findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Date Self-Report Submitted: March 2, 2010

COMPONENT I: COMMITMENT AND COLLABORATION - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 – GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Findings:

The University of Texas (UT) is in compliance with Texas Administration Code (TAC) §228.20 Governance of Educator Preparation Programs. For a number of years, the College of Education has operated with several Advisory Committees such as Applied Learning and Development (ALD) for the EC-6 program and the RISE Committee for Special Education. Each of these committees had a variety of members representing the groups required in TAC §228.20(b). However, none of the committees contained all of them in one functioning group. As a result, the University of Texas recently convened another advisory committee comprised of all members. The official name for this new group is the *EC-6, ESL, Bilingual, and Special Education Advisory Committee*. The advisory committee currently consists of 13 members: two (2) from school districts, five (5) from higher education, three (3) from the education service center, and two (2) from business and community. The people selected for this committee have previously served on one of the other functioning committees. The advisory committee now meets the membership requirements in TAC §228.20(b); however, the advisory committee and the College of Education would benefit from increased depth of membership by including mentor teachers, student teachers, school district human resource directors, and additional members from the communities that it serves. At the same time, the size of the committee must be considered in order to provide an environment for idea and information exchange through interactive dialogues.

An orientation and training meeting for the new advisory committee was held on March 31, 2010 during the Texas Education Agency monitoring visit. Attendance was recorded, agendas were available and minutes were taken. In the document review, attendance records, agendas, and minutes were available in for the other committees that had been functioning prior to the new one. The next meeting of the advisory committee is scheduled for April 22, 2010.

Sixteen out of 33 advisory committee members responded to the advisory committee's questionnaire. Based on their responses on how members have influenced the UT program, the members indicated that they participated in the transition planning from the Generalist EC-4 to Generalist EC-6 certificate. The self-report indicated that the advisory committee is involved in all phases of policy decision making, long-term planning, program design and evaluation. The members confirmed this and also indicated that they were well versed in their roles and responsibilities. Because of the importance of this new advisory committee's contributions, it is suggested to provide members training annually and to develop a handbook to help guide the activities and responsibilities of the committee.

COMPONENT II. ADMISSION CRITERIA - Texas Administrative Code (TAC)

§227.10 - ADMISSION CRITERIA

Findings:

The University of Texas is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §227.10-Admission Requirements.

Per the self-report, information found on the UT website, in other documents presented, in order to be admitted into the University of Texas at Austin, the candidates must have satisfactory grades and scores on the SAT, ACT, or the TSI instruments, and have passed all sections of the TOEFL if they were a student from out of the country. In order to be admitted to the Professional Development Sequence I(PDS) in the College of Education, the candidate must complete an application, present documented evidence of proficiency in reading and in oral and written communication, have a grade of at least C in each prerequisite courses and in each of their education related courses. In addition, the student may not lack more than twelve semester hours. These admission requirements were confirmed in the student folder review

The University of Texas disseminates recruiting information to potential candidates through the advisory committee members, website, their catalogue, career fairs, school and community college visits, and brochures. Multiple special events are held for prospective students such as Longhorn Saturdays, Longhorn for a Day, Explore UT, and UT VIP Day to name but a few. During the document review, TEA staff viewed samples of recruiting materials. Sufficient evidence exists that admission criteria are applied in an equitable manner for all candidates.

COMPONENT III. CURRICULUM - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30 - EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM

Findings:

University of Texas – Austin is in compliance with TAC §228.30 Educator Preparation Curriculum.

The College of Education faculty consists of 120 members. In reviewing the faculty information presented in the document review, fifty-eight (58) have doctorates and twenty-three (23) have master's degrees. Furthermore, forty-two (42) are certified Texas teachers and thirty-eight (38) are certified teachers from other states. Five (5) are certified teachers from other countries. The faculty as a whole has many years of experience in dealing with students of all ages and ethnic groups.

One hundred percent (100%) of the student teachers indicated that they had been provided with a clear and concise course syllabus. In reviewing the available course syllabi and procedural documents from UT, it was found that the University has prescribed common components for the syllabi which included course and instructor information, an overview of the course with prerequisite, if applicable, the subject matter of each lecture or discussion, grading policy, a brief descriptive overview of all major course requirements and assignments, the dates of exams and assignments that count for 20% or more of the class grade, and the final exam date and time. In addition, the syllabi includes a list of required and recommended materials such as textbooks, the class website, and a notice that students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations. The syllabi are provided in an electronic form by each instructor so they may be posted on the department's website. In the College of Education, they had not yet modified the syllabus format by adding such items as TEKS correlations. However, it is recommended that all syllabi provide a more intentional presentation of the seventeen (17) required curriculum topics (TAC§228.30), TEKS, and SBEC educator standards that are aligned with the educator preparation courses. In courses requiring field experiences and TExES preparation, activities and guidelines are outlined.

Students in the EC-6 ESL Professional Development Sequence (PDS) are not required to complete a designated technology course. Instructional technology preparation is integrated throughout several courses. Twenty-two percent (22%) of the cooperating teachers responding to the questionnaire indicated their desire for student teachers to be better prepared in integrating instructional technology. To provide comprehensive development in implementing educational technologies, choosing technical tools and resources to improve educational practice, and to construct electronic media to support teaching and learning, it is recommended that instructional technology performance assessments align to the state educator standards be included in the formative and summative assessment instruments. The Star Chart, which can be found on the Texas Education Agency website, would be a useful tool in identifying the technology competency of each candidate and the campus on which they are working.

Preparation on PPR curriculum topics, the educator standards, TAKS, and the TEKS was confirmed through the self-report and student teacher responses, as well as through the PPR course correlation required by TEA and the certification field application matrix that was

provided. A review of the instructor's materials for three of the EC-6 ESL field's courses confirmed the implementation of topic-aligned activities and assessments. To adequately prepare teacher candidates, it is recommended that a curriculum analysis be conducted to address the alignment of course objectives, activities, and assessments to the substance of the required SBEC educator standards.

Since staff indicated that some of the courses in the PDS were developed prior to the implementation of the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), it is recommended that the Generalist EC-6 ESL PDS courses are analyzed by the program to improve their degree of alignment with the ELPS. The courses for the bilingual ESL program are currently in progress of being aligned to the ELPS. It is further recommended that the ELPS are aligned with all subject-area methods course objectives, activities, and assessments, e.g., science, so that teacher candidates can develop the knowledge and skills necessary for making content accessible to English Language Learners. It is recommended that the aligned ELPS are included in the course syllabi for subject-area methods courses in the Generalist EC-6 ESL professional development sequence and for the subject-area methods courses in each of the University program's certification fields.

In addition to the coursework, it is also mandatory that the students attend sixteen (16) clock hours of professional development seminars. The seminars cover topics such as school law, career strategies and other pertinent topics. If the student misses one of the seminars, they are allowed to make up the session by watching videos of the session and responding to questions on the content.

The six hours of test preparation are currently embedded in the EDC 950 Elementary Practicum-Student Teaching course. This course is required of all teaching candidates.

Based on the student teacher questionnaire, areas that students would like to see more emphasis placed are: teacher's responsibilities for administering the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) examination (35%); standards and teaching strategies for students designated as gifted and talented (45%); conducting parent conferences (22%); and reading strategies across the curriculum for all grade levels (17%).

From their questionnaires, in addition to technology usage, cooperating teachers indicated that they would like to see more emphasis on classroom management and reading instruction.

COMPONENT IV: PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ONGOING SUPPORT - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – PREPARATION PROGRAM COURSEWORK AND/OR TRAINING

Findings:

University of Texas – Austin is in compliance with TAC §228.35 Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training.

The Professional Development Sequence (PDS) program is delivered primarily in a face-to-face format over three semesters of coursework and field experiences for the Generalist EC-6

ESL/Bilingual Generalist, and four semesters of coursework and field experience for the all level Generic Special Education certification.

Classes are conducted both at the UT campus and on-site at designated schools. All class meetings are held in three hour blocks. In the document review and presentation by the program, the total hours for the Generalist EC-6 program are 1136 while the hours for the Generalist EC-6 Bilingual certificate are 1223 clock hours. The Special Education Program consists of Intern Semesters I-III and the Apprentice Teacher Practicum for a total of 1311 hours.

In criteria for Intern Semester I, the students have the opportunity to work in general education classrooms serving students in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten. Students must spend a minimum of three mornings per week over a 12-week period. In addition, students will take five courses that coordinate with their field experiences.

In Intern Semester II, students will have the opportunity to work in general education classrooms serving students in grades 1-5. Students must spend a minimum of two days per week in the classroom for a 12-week period. Again, students will take four courses that coordinate with their field experiences.

In the Apprentice Teacher Practicum, students will have the opportunity to work with general education students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Students must spend five days per week in the classroom over a 13-week period. In addition, students will take an additional course (usually methods) that should coordinate with their field-based experience. This course may be offered during the school day or in the evening. If the time is taken during the instructional day, the intern must add the missed hours after week 13 of the practicum. The students will be expected to complete major assignments during their practicum such as a pacing guide, units to be taught, individual tutoring, and student assessments.

The University of Texas' field supervision uses cluster cohort groups. Students are placed in groups of 25 under the supervision of a Cohort Coordinator and UT facilitators who are graduate students who have completed a three-hour graduate course with 45 contact hours entitled Supervision and Teaching. Facilitators and apprentice teachers are required to attend a mandatory professional development session provided by the Education Services: Field Experiences, Career Services and Induction Office at the beginning of each semester. They also attend the same mentor training provided to the cooperating teachers. The facilitators usually dedicate 20 hours a week to field supervision of teaching candidates. The same Cohort Coordinator supervises all activities of their specific cohort group during Intern I, Intern II, and Apprentice Teacher Practicum.

The first contact with apprentice teachers occurs prior to the practicum semester. Coordinators schedule an initial meeting with the apprentice teachers to review policies and procedures for the semester. The facilitators are encouraged to maintain weekly contact with the coordinators in order to keep them updated on the apprentice teacher's progress. The coordinator and facilitators will schedule a time to meet with the apprentice teachers at least once per month during the semester.

Ongoing and regular classroom observations by the university field supervisors are conducted 6-9 times for 45 minutes during the teaching practicum. Observations are followed by an interactive face-to-face conference where the apprentice teacher is presented with a copy of the

formal observation. In addition, there is one formative three-way conference held at midpoint of the teaching practicum and an additional one at the end of the 13 weeks. In reviewing the student folders, it was noted that the formative and summative forms contained signatures of both the facilitator and student teachers, but there were not signatures or initials on the intern observation forms. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the field supervisors reported that they do not provide a written copy of the candidate's formal observation to the campus administrator. In discussions with Dr. Sharon Evans, it was pointed out that since there is such a great number of student teachers in designated schools, that in consultation with the principals, they agreed it would be more appropriate to place the student observation forms in a folder located in the cooperating teacher's classroom. The principal is aware that the observations are there and they have access to them at any time.

Cooperating teachers are provided a stipend if they attend training and host one of the UT students. Topics covered during the training are cognitive coaching, TXBess procedures, and the use of reflective conversations for self-evaluation. The cooperating teachers receive a handbook for the internship in which they participate. This was confirmed in the cooperating teacher questionnaire. The university facilitators meet the cooperating teachers prior to the intern/apprentice teachers' first day on campus. The facilitator reviews the expectations for the initial meetings between themselves and the intern/apprentice teacher, classroom visits and observations, mid-semester and final evaluations, and necessary record-keeping. In addition, the facilitators will provide the cooperating teachers with the web address for cooperating teacher materials.

Students who are struggling in the teacher education program are identified by the facilitator during any of the internship semesters. If a student is experiencing significant difficulty meeting expectations, the coordinator may need to develop an Individualized Performance Plan (IPP) with the facilitator, cooperating teacher and the apprentice teacher. The director of the Education Services: Field Experiences, Career Services and Induction Office will be notified and review a copy of the IPP. The instructors of the professional development sequence courses are consulted to determine if any requirements associated with their courses should be included in the plan.

For students who are struggling with oral or written language issues, Education Services oversees the Language Support and Review process where students receive free ESL testing, recommendations from the LSR Committee on support services, and/or direct connections to support services. For students who are struggling with health and/or disability-related issues, the Dean's Office provides a support team to collect information and direct the student to the best available resources. For students struggling in classes, the Dean's Office provides one-on-one counselors/advisors that make recommendations that best serve the students.

**COMPONENT V. PROGRAM EVALUATION - Texas Administrative Code (TAC)
§228.40 - ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR
CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.**

Findings:

Student progress throughout the Professional Development School are monitored through a formative and summative assessment three way conference involving the student, cooperating teacher, and university supervision for a minimum of two and a half semesters. Both the formative and summative documents are aligned with the PDAS, TXBess, TEKS, and TAKS. The University Faculty Coordinator and the Director of Education Services reviews each document after completion. Ongoing and regular classroom observations are conducted three to nine times per semester to ensure student success in the program. In discussions with the Associate Dean, Dr. Sherry Field, it was discovered that some cohorts are using e-portfolios to collect artifacts to be used as part of benchmarking and assessment. However, they are not used as general practice with all cohorts.

The program and curriculum evaluation is an ongoing process. The program exit survey that looks at curriculum, field experiences, education services, and advising is completed by teacher candidates in all certification programs. Data from this survey is compiled and results and recommendations to address programmatic issues are made to the Associate Dean for Teacher Education, Director of Education Services, and ALD course leaders. The Technology Initiatives Evaluation is completed by teacher candidates on the use of technology in coursework and field experiences. This data is compiled and shared with the Laptop Initiative Committee, the ALD/Assessment Committee, and the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. The Teacher/Employer Survey is administered every semester following the College's Career Fairs. This survey asks potential employers about the employing entities needs and about UT graduates' teaching performance.

The pass rates on the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES) and Texas Oral Proficiency Test (TOPT) exam are monitored by the Associate Dean after each administration. Areas where teacher candidates fail are identified and corrective action is taken with the students, faculty, and curriculum is reviewed and modified. Compiled results are documented by the Associate Dean and ALD/Assessment Committee and are disseminated annually to department chairs and faculty.

Student records are kept in both paper and electronic formats for five years in a secure environment.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency Visit. If the program is NOT in compliance with any component, please consult the TAC rules and initiate actions to correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. A progress report will be required in one year on Compliance Recommendations.

General program recommendations are suggestions for general program improvement and do not require follow-up.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS: A Progress Report will be required in one year.

None at this time.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: No progress report is necessary.

- Align terminology with Texas Administration Code (TAC) definitions.
- Increased the advisory committee membership to include more members representing the school districts and the community.
- Provide advisory committee training yearly.
- Develop and provide an advisory committee handbook to reinforce roles and responsibilities and to emphasize the importance of the committee's involvement and commitment.
- Sign or initial all observations forms (including student teacher, cooperating teacher, and observer).
- Standardized a format for the course syllabi.
- Explore ways that teaching candidates can collect artifacts to be used as one facet of student assessment of progress throughout the program.
- Analyze program courses to improve their degree of alignment with the English Language Proficiencies (ELPS) found in TAC Chapter 74.4.
- Align the ELPS with all subject area methods course objectives, activities, and assessments.
- Include instructional technology performance assessments aligned to the state educator standards in the formative and summative assessment instruments.